

**Maiden Wind Farm DEIS Comments from public meeting in Prosser on April 23, 2002**

- I saw the project on the news last night and want to learn more.
- I think this project is a good thing because it is a clean form of energy.
- I am interested in having a wind farm on my property.
- We've been in favor of wind power and have been trying to get wind power in the area since 1984.
- I am in favor of wind power on my land.
- Renewable resources -- DEIS says people want it, but doesn't it cost about 20% more?
- I prefer wind to polluting technologies, but prefer hydro to wind. Good hydro, that is.
- I can't understand the people who are against it; they don't want nuclear, they don't want dams ...
- Get started!
- I am concerned about one company coming in and potentially blocking other companies from doing wind projects.
- Don't want properties not leased by the developer to be studied in the EIS.
- What kind of foundations will be used?
- Will you study building new access roads?
- Interested in working on project.
- Concerned about 5,000 foot setback from GMA.
- Define special status species.
- Mitigation banking for BPA and other projects is preferred. This piecemeal approach to mitigation will hurt us. It is a large tract of land to split up.
- In Benton County, sage brush/shrub-steppe takes 40-50 years to grow. In Grant County, it would take 10-15 years because they have more precipitation. Temporary impacts to sage brush/shrub-steppe really aren't temporary in this area.
- Are there any standard bird surveys?
- Will you look at visual impacts on neighbors, as well as on property owners who want the wind farm?
- What do the locals think of the aesthetics?
- I drive from here to Walla Walla and it makes me want to cry -- I don't like all those turbines. I wish we had some viewing corridors of shrub steppe.
- If I'm going to have to look at them, I might as well sign up and have them on my land.
- Distance from highway makes this location preferable to Stateline.
- People are worried about the view but they'll get used to it.
- At what level is tribal participation?
- Benton County is the fastest growing area in Washington. There are a lot of examples around here of responsible development.
- We need wind power to survive in these times of farming.
- This wind project will be good for our local economy!
- WDFW did not see their scoping letter in the agency correspondence appendix.

April 10, 2002

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**To Whom It May Concern:**

This letter provides comments to the Maiden Wind Farm draft NEPA/SEPA Environmental Impact Statement DOE/EIS-0333. The Washington Natural Heritage Program inventories and maintains a database of rare plants and high quality ecosystem types in Washington.

The current status of the bunchgrass steppe and shrub steppe ecosystem in Washington is declining in area and in condition. Over 50% of this habitat's original range has been converted to agriculture, urban or industrial areas. Of the remaining original shrub steppe habitat, less than 10% appears in good or better condition. These statistics demonstrate the degree of concern directed at any conversion of natural/seminatural shrub steppe or steppe to other uses.

Much of the northern edge of the proposed wind farm is adjacent to the Rattlesnake Research Natural Area on the Hanford National Monument. That natural area contains some of the best examples of native bunchgrass steppe and shrub steppe communities in the state, as well as, in the inland Pacific Northwest. The proposed wind farm is partially located in a natural/seminatural habitat corridor between the Monument and the Yakima Firing Range, another stronghold of natural, native bunchgrass ecosystems.

The western half of the proposed The Maiden Wind Farm is located in natural/seminatural vegetation. Although we do not have recent inventory information of that specific area, inspection of photographs in Figures 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 12 and habitat descriptions of rare plant habitat in the Eagle Cap Consulting, Inc. "An investigation of the rare plant resources associated with the Maiden Wind Farm -- Benton and Yakima counties, Washington" technical report (2002) indicate a continuation of high quality natural vegetation from Hanford south on to adjacent land and occurrence of native bunchgrass steppe communities on the project area.

The increasing rarity of this habitat for a large number of plant and animal species and the location of the proposed wind farm in a corridor between two large landscapes of native natural habitat raises concern over the direct conversion native habitat along the path turbine installation.

RECEIVED BY BPA PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT LOG#: MW/EIS-0333
RECEIPT DATE: APR 11 2002